Fisheries and Oceans Science | Pêches et Océans Sciences

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Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat

Research Document 2001/077

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Secrétariat canadien de consultation scientifique

Document de recherche 2001/077

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Results of the 2000 Fish Harvesters' Committees questionnaire

H. Jarvis, R. Stead[1]

Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union
P.O. Box 10, Station C, St. John's, NF A1C 5H5

[1]Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Science Branch, Newfoundland Region
P.O. Box 5667, St. John's NF A1C 5X1

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* La présente série documente les bases scientifiques des évaluations des ressources halieutiques du Canada. Elle traite des problèmes courants selon les échéanciers dictés. Les documents qu'elle contient ne doivent pas être considérés comme des énoncés définitifs sur les sujets traités, mais plutôt comme des rapports d'étape sur les études en cours.

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ISSN 1480-4883
Ottawa, 2001

Canada

Abstract

Sentinel survey participants are commercial fish harvesters who have received training in the collection of biological and oceanographic data. These data have become widely used in cod stock assessments. In 1997 the Fish Food and Allied Workers Union, the project sponsor, and DFO Science developed a questionnaire that was circulated to Professional Fish Harvesters' committees in those communities where sentinel activity takes place. As a method of peer review, these committees were asked to compare sentinel results with their observations from various commercial fisheries and to provide suggestions and recommendations on sentinel processes. In general, their comments agree with the trends seen in sentinel catch rates.

Résumé

Les participants aux pêches indicatrices sont des pêcheurs commerciaux qui ont reçu une formation en collecte de données biologiques et océanographiques. Ces données sont couramment utilisées pour évaluer l'état des stocks de morue. En 1997, la Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers Union, parraine du projet, et le Secteur des sciences du MPO ont préparé un questionnaire, qui a été distribué aux comités de pêcheurs professionnels dans les collectivités où s'effectuent des pêches indicatrices. Aux fins d'examen par les pairs, on a demandé à ces comités de comparer les résultats des pêches indicatrices à leurs observations sur diverses pêches commerciales et de présenter des suggestions et des recommandations sur le processus des pêches indicatrices. En général, leurs commentaires concordent aux tendances observées dans les taux de capture obtenus dans le cadre de ces dernières.

Introduction

One of the stated objectives of the Sentinel program is to incorporate the knowledge of inshore fishers in the resource assessment process. In addition to collecting catch and effort, migration and biological data, Sentinel was developed to provide an opportunity for commercial fish harvesters to provide specific details and observations about cod for assessment purposes.

To this end, in 1995 and 1996 public meetings were conducted. The Sentinel data was presented and those fish harvesters who attended were asked to provide an interpretation of the results and any additional observations or comments. However, only a small number of meetings could be conducted and attendance at those meetings in 1996 was very low.

To collect information from more fish harvesters and from a much wider geographic area, in 1997 a questionnaire was developed and sent to the fish harvester committee at each Sentinel site. Its purpose was to compare Sentinel results with fish harvesters' observations on cod while conducting various fisheries (lump, black back, capelin, etc.). The 1998, 1999 and 2000 questionnaires focused on observations made by fish harvesters while prosecuting the index / commercial cod fishery.

Each year following the conclusion of the Sentinel Survey, the questionnaire and Sentinel catch rate data are sent to each Sentinel enterprise owner. All Sentinel data is made available to the committee and Sentinel / DFO personnel are available to attend the meetings when requested. The Sentinel enterprise owner contacts the fish harvester committee that represents the area where the Sentinel site is located, meetings are held and the completed questionnaire is returned.

Since the Sentinel program began in 1995, fish harvesters, through their local committees, have been providing planning and interpretative assistance. Their assistance and input is one reason the program is providing valuable information about the status of cod in the inshore. The authors wish to acknowledge efforts of the 250 fish harvester committee members who volunteer their time each year to provide us with valuable help and advice.

2000 Committee Survey Results

Sentinel catch rate trend – As in past years most fish harvester committees have stated that the trend seen in Sentinel results corresponds with the observations of area fish harvesters. During 2000, 95 % percent of fish harvester committees reported that the trend in Sentinel catch rates was the same as the trend in cod abundance as observed by fish harvesters.

A summary of the observations of fish harvesters, as reported by the fish harvester committee at Sentinel sites follows.

Figure 1 -- 2000 Commercial catch rates – Catch rates from 2J and Northern 3K continue to be very low. Many sites in southern 3K and 3L experienced low catch rates as well in 2000.

Figure 2 -- 2000 vs 1999 Commercial catch rates -- Overall in 2J3KL, almost 95 % of committees felt catch rates were the same or lower than 1999.

Figure 3 -- Sounder recordings -- Overall in 2J3KL, most committees felt sounder recordings indicated the abundance of cod was the same as or less than 1999.

Figure 4 -- Bait fish -- Committees, overall, felt the amount of bait fish present during 2000 was the same as or better than in 1999.

Figure 5 -- Recruitment -- Except for 2J, most committees felt that the abundance of small cod had increased from 1999.

Figure 6 -- Cod condition -- Committee comments indicate cod are in average to good condition.

In addition to collecting observation information the questionnaire provided an opportunity for committees to record general comments and recommendations. While those comments and recommendations have not been summarized here, copies of the completed questionnaire forms are available upon request.

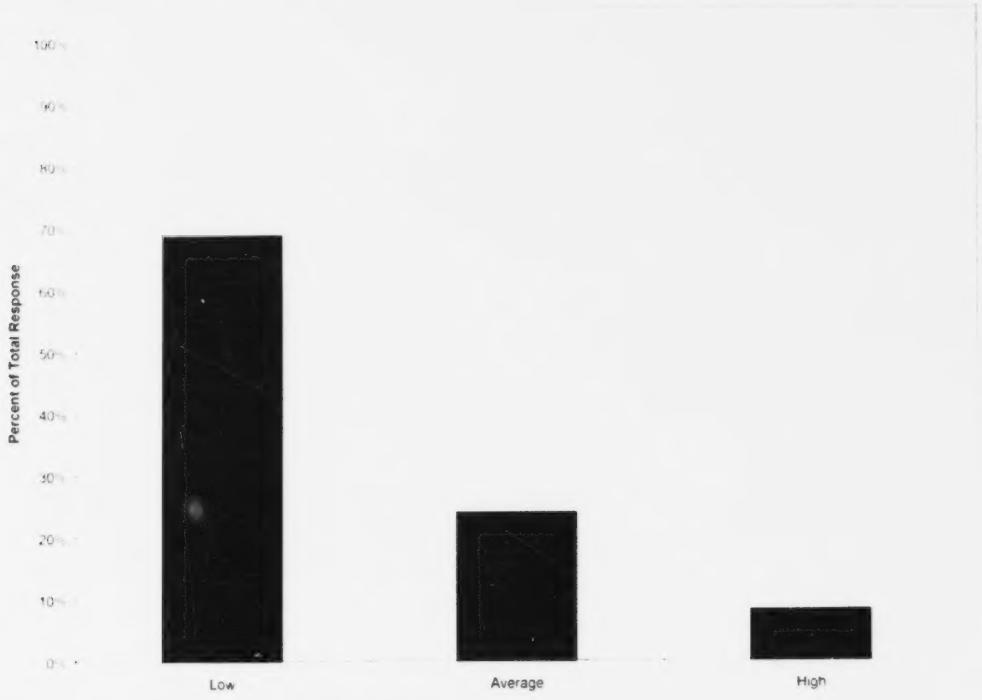

Figure 1. 2000 commercial catch rates

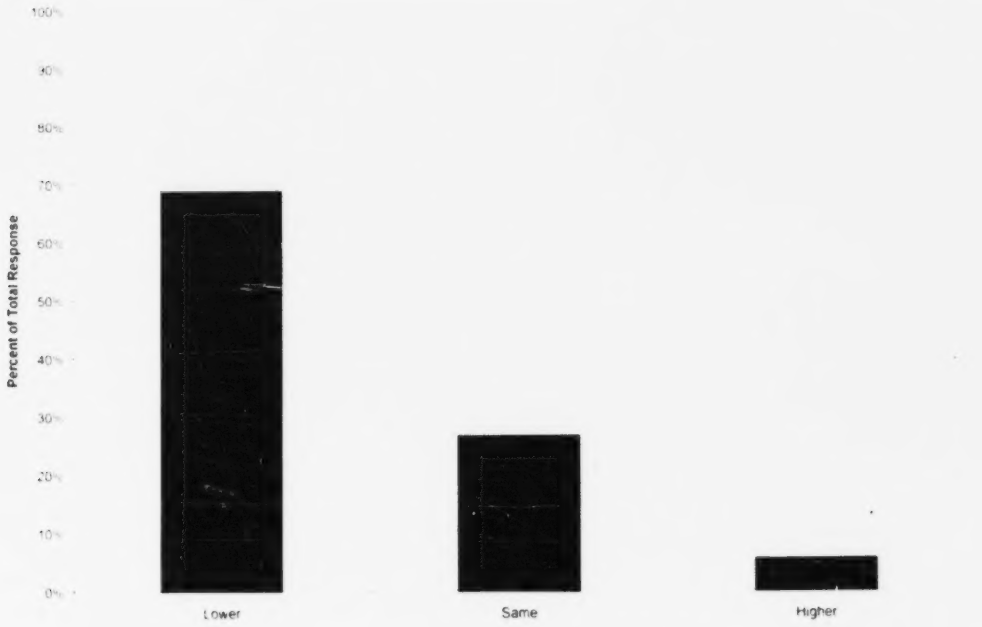

Figure 2. 2000 vs. 1999 commercial catch rates

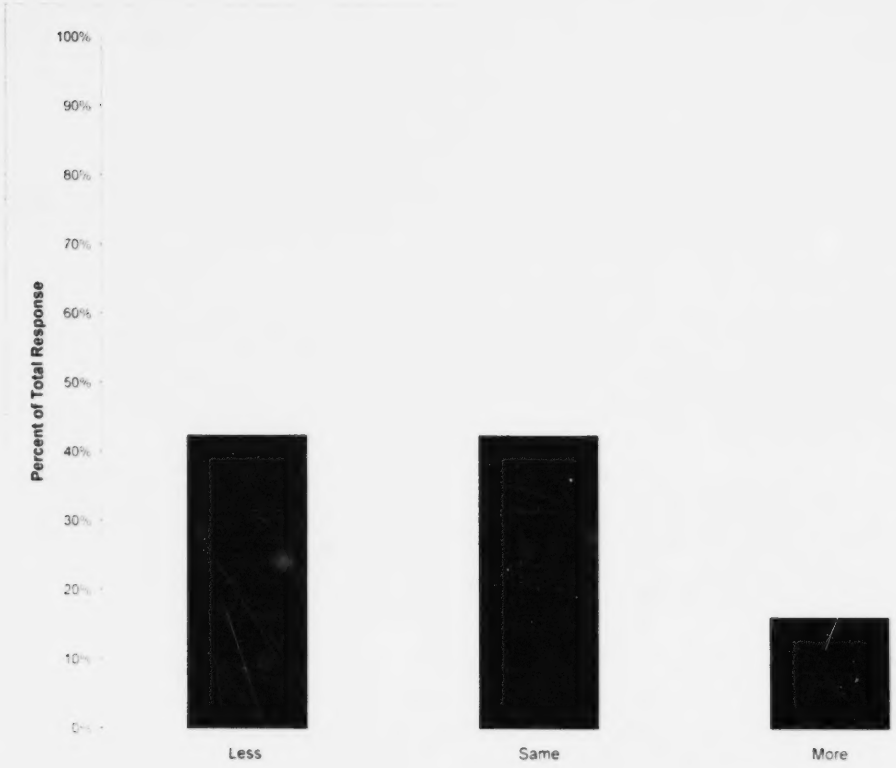

Figure 3. Sounder observations

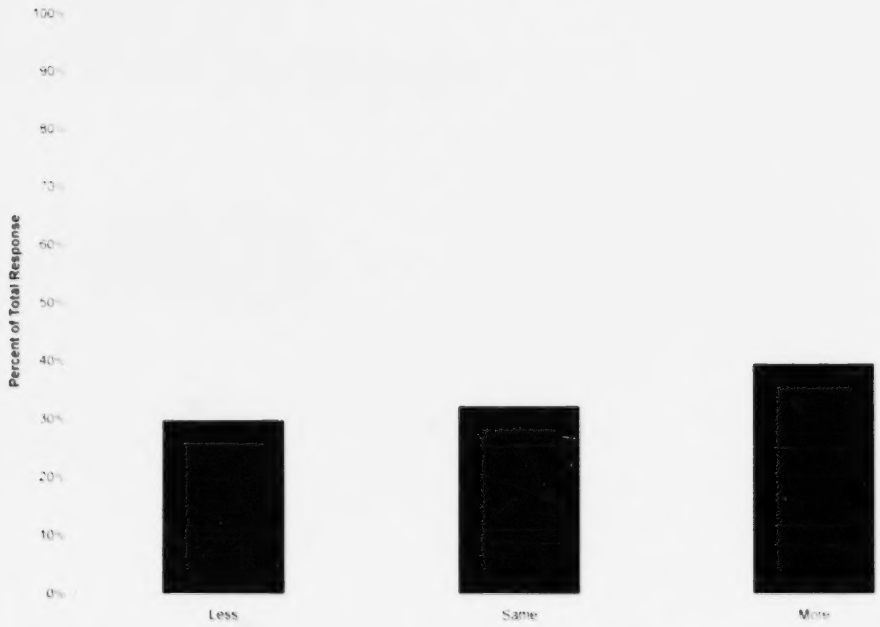

Figure 4. Abundance of bait species

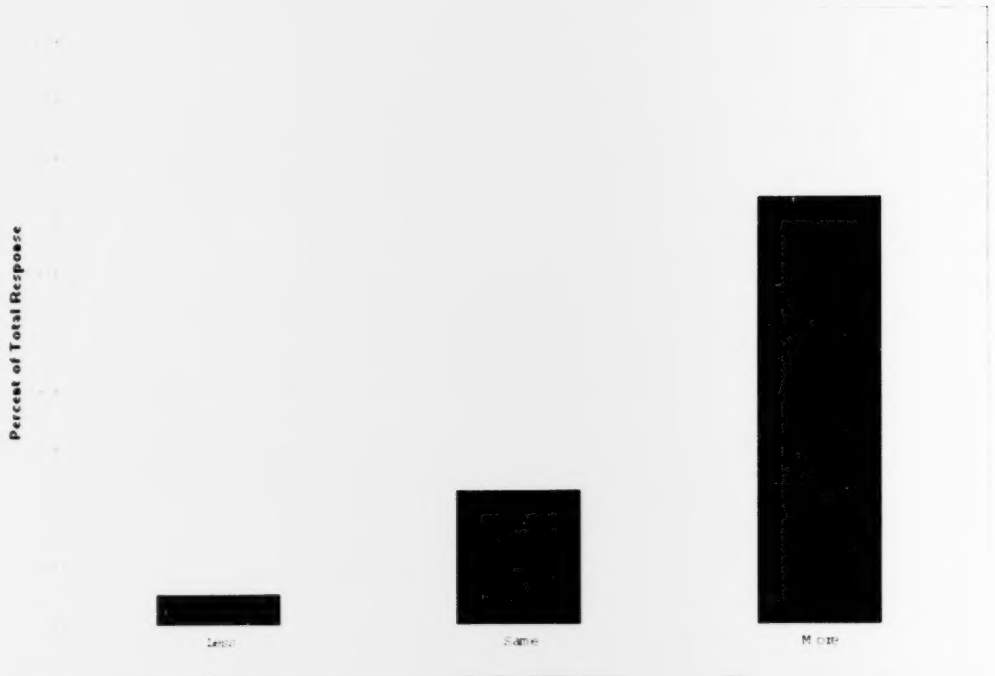

Figure 5. Recruitment

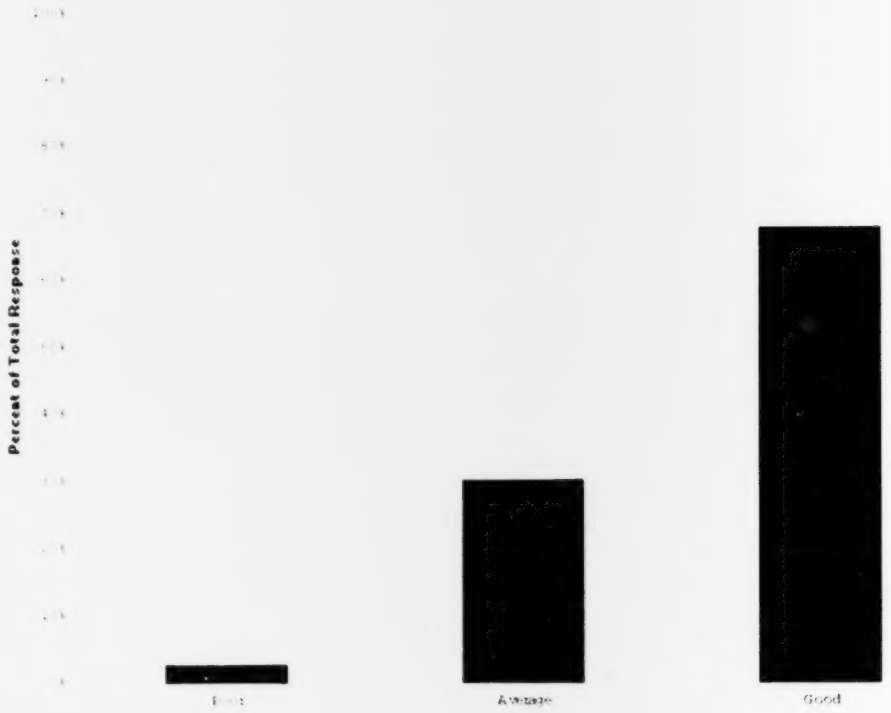

Figure 6. Cod condition